

not all specialized accreditors are active overseas, some do grant accreditation or the equivalent to programs offered by non-U.S. institutions. For example, AACSB International -- The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business has long accredited business programs offered by institutions outside the U.S. The Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology recognizes engineering programs offered by institutions outside the U.S. as "substantially equivalent" to ABET-accredited programs offered by U.S. institutions.

In recent years some higher education institutions organized and operating outside the U.S., including in the Arab world, have sought institutional accreditation by U.S. institutional accreditors. According to the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, U.S. regional accreditors currently accredit over 20 institutions operating in countries other than the U.S., including The American University in Cairo, American University of Beirut, and American University of Sharjah. Zayed University in the United Arab Emirates is a candidate for accreditation with one of the U.S. institutional accreditors.

Higher education institutions in the Arab world may want to consider accreditation by U.S. institutional or specialized accreditors in order to obtain independent evaluation of the institution or program and attain an internationally recognized "seal of approval". Institutions seeking U.S. accreditation need to determine whether they are eligible for accreditation under the criteria of the relevant accreditor and to meet extensive standards relating to the institution's governance, educational programs, finances, and other areas of operation. Although the process for achieving accreditation is time-consuming, it can be worthwhile. ■

INVESTING IN EDUCATION

International Education and Resource Network (iEARN) in the Arab World

By Carole Ryavec

Active in 115 countries, International Education and Resource Network (iEARN) is the world's largest K-12 project-based Internet-supported learning network. The iEARN network provides a secure environment for information sharing through online teacher and student forums.

The iEARN network has members in most Arab countries, and students join in all forms of global collaborative projects with students in other countries. There is also an Arabic language forum at apc.earn.arabic. The programs run in these countries include: technology exchange; physical exchange; environmental studies. Many of the technology and exchange programs are funded by U.S. government grants.

TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS JORDAN

iEARN members have been active in Jordan since 1992. Many schools struggle to keep their students up-to-date on the latest technology. Jordan's King Abdullah, who recently launched an impressive initiative to provide all of its schools with computers and basic technology training, was running into this very problem. A unique solution was to be found - in far-off New York City - a program to bring

technical help to schools in Jordan while building cross-cultural friendships along the way.

The State Department-supported LINC (Linking Individuals, Knowledge, & Culture (LINC) Program enhances Jordan's efforts by empowering students to contribute solutions. The program started in April 2005 with the arrival of the Jordanian students for their 3-week visit to New York City and ran through the summer of 2005, when the New York City students traveled to Jordan.

Building on iEARN's mission to build international trust and understanding through shared online classroom projects, participants also will host each other for three-week stays in the spring and summer of 2005 in a physical exchange administered by AYUSA.

YEMEN

iEARN-Arabia Trains Teachers in Connective Technologies

"Internet for Yemeni High Schools" was established in October 2003. The purpose of the program, is to connect schools in Yemen to the Internet to 1) improve teachers' ability to facilitate student-centered lessons; 2) improve student learning by allowing Yemeni students, and girls in particular, to do research with other students in Yemen, the region, and the US; and 3) assess the impact of the use of the Internet as a teaching tool in schools.

Carole Ryavec is the Co-Director of Development of iEARN. For more information about iEARN and its projects, programs and partners, please visit their website at www.earn.org.

**INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION AND
RESOURCE NETWORK
(iEARN) IN THE ARAB
WORLD**

In February 2005, a workshop was held in Sana'a, Yemen by iEARN to introduce to secondary school teachers to the connective power of the Internet and using it and other technologies with classroom curriculum subjects. The workshop was opened by Dr. Toufick Soufian and the Director General of the Ministry of Education.

iEARN welcomed more than 200 additional teachers from Yemen to its international community of educators in September 2005. In December 2005, the teachers from Sana'a and Aden will begin 12-week online courses for further

schools. As part of the program, participating students exchange experiences via iEARN cyber-diaries. The YES Program was made possible through funding from the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

**BUILDING RESPECT
THROUGH INTERNET
DIALOGUE AND GLOBAL
EDUCATION [BRIDGE]**

Launched in the summer of 2002, the BRIDGE (Building Respect through Internet Dialogue and Global Education) Program is focused on building links between students and teachers worldwide. As part of the program, iEARN has built a community of over 800 schools involved in collaborative thematic online project activities and exchange partnerships.

In cooperation with the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (Office of Citizen Exchange's Youth Programs Division), ministries of education, and NGOs, iEARN has expanded Internet connectivity in order to link schools worldwide, and has provided online and face-to-face professional development programs for educators.

In July 2005, iEARN held its Third Annual BRIDGE Regional Conference in Beirut, Lebanon. 100 BRIDGE teachers and students from the USA, Egypt, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Morocco, Tunisia, Malaysia, and Indonesia participated in dynamic and interactive workshops to use online project-based collaboration to empower youth.

Noting that many participants had come from abroad, despite this year's political upheaval, Eliane Metni, iEARN-Lebanon Coordinator, described their presence as a "vote of confidence in the spirit of iEARN and of

Lebanon." The event drew several notables from Lebanon's political scene. MP Bahia Hariri, described by Master of Ceremonies Karim Abu Haydar as a "true believer" and active supporter of iEARN in Lebanon, delivered the event's opening remarks. Abdo Yammine also spoke on behalf of the Education Ministry.

Students, teachers, and administrators plunged into the first session of the three-day workshop series with exactly this spirit. In a vibrant exchange among Egyptian and Lebanese educators, May Mondak of Lebanon noted the effort and time iEARN demanded; Egyptian colleagues also noted the expense. Nevertheless, Suzan Abdel-Fattah Marzouk of Egypt observed that "it's important for the future" to overcome these obstacles. "Most Arabs have pre-conceived notions about each other. Communication," she said, "helps to break down these stereotypes."

ENVIRONMENT PROJECTS

Since 1995, the YouthCaN (Youth Communications and Networking) project has brought together youth from all around the world to share how they are using technology in environmental projects. The next YouthCaN conference will take place April 8-10, 2006, bringing together over 1,000 students, centered at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, and linking to youth in Lebanon, Egypt and Morocco.

In April 2005, Students in Lebanon (YouthCaN Med) joined through the Internet and video-conferencing with the students in New York City. This project is co-sponsored by the American Museum of Natural History, iEARN, Caretakers of the Earth/USA and a number of high school environmental organizations.

The world's largest K-12 project-based, Internet-supported learning network comes to the Arab World

instruction in collaborative project-based learning. iEARN will implement the online courses in English and Arabic.

MOROCCO

iEARN-Morocco developed a network of schools in the country. Building links both locally and internationally, it is also active in the BRIDGE projects. iEARN-Morocco has partnered with US AID to bring more than 1000 Moroccan schools into a wide ranging program to integrate technology into project based learning.

**EXCHANGE PROGRAMS
THE YES PROGRAM**

This program was established in October 2002 for secondary school students from Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, Jordan, West Bank/Gaza, Egypt, Kuwait, Syria, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen, to spend up to one academic year in the US. iEARN enhanced the program through ongoing online project partnerships among participating

Students in Egypt have expanded their YouthCaN environmental work with a "Two Rivers – One World" project linking students in Egypt and students in New York. "We started by collecting samples from different places, not only the river," said Ahmed, a student from Egypt, "but also its branches all over Egypt. We also collected samples from houses, coffee shops, flats, country side, lake fishermen houses in order to know "if there are river problems" how they will affect humans that use this river. In our second step, we printed a questionnaire that people filled about how efficient the water system is. We continued searching to find out about the waste management."

Ahmed and his fellow students knew that some wastes reach the river, so they examined the effects of those wastes on the environment, especially on fish, at the stream water. "We found many interesting relationships between all these things, so we made a small camp at a place called WESC (Wadi Environmental Science Centre) to analyze the samples in the lab. Now, we are connecting all the results with our assumptions to see how true they were."

iEARN sponsors other on-line learning partnerships. For

example, in Algeria, teachers are participating in iEARN forums on an ongoing basis. iEARN is working with the Ministry of Education to encourage their participation in iEARN projects. In July 2005 the Algerian Ministry of Education sent three teachers to the iEARN BRIDGE regional conference in Lebanon. In Bahrain, several schools in Manama, both primary and secondary, are involved in iEARN project work, and have been part of the launch of the "Friendship Through Education" initiative.

Teachers and students in Iraq have been involved since 2004,

Program, Schools Online, and the Ministry of Education of the Palestinian Authority to bring schools in Gaza and West Bank on-line and into project work. In 2004, an independent iEARN-Palestine was created, based in Ramallah. In Syria, teachers are participating in iEARN projects that promote cross-cultural dialogue and civic education. iEARN-Syria is working closely with the Ministry of Education to train teachers in project-based teaching methodologies.

In Tunisia as well as the United Arab Emirates, iEARN is working closely with the Ministry of Education to train

INTERNATIONAL
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Building international understanding through shared on-line classroom projects from Morocco to Yemen.

through video-conference events in partnership with Global Nomads Group and through online interaction. Schools are located in Baghdad, Erbil and Basra. Teachers from these cities participated in training workshops in Amman in 2004. iEARN is helping these schools establish wireless broadband connectivity. In Kuwait, schools are involved in iEARN's Learning Circle projects.

In the late 1990s, iEARN worked with the WorLd

teachers in project-based teaching methodologies that promote cross-cultural dialogue and civic education. ■

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